

THE
Connecticut Common School Journal
AND
ANNALS OF EDUCATION.

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VOL. VIII. HARTFORD, SEPTEMBER, 1861. No. 9.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

"CHILDHOOD was originally designed to be the era and the instrument of spiritual nurture." Is it not emphatically the period, when a tendency and direction are given to the unfolding energies of the mind and heart, which mark the future character? If it be true that early impressions are lasting, that habits formed in youth strengthen as the mental powers develop, thus controlling and establishing the reputation of the future man; then does it not follow, that early training or primary teaching is of the highest possible importance, in our system of public instruction? And is it not, at the same time true, that it is the least thought of and the most neglected?

Almost anybody is considered competent and suitable to become the teacher of young children. "Character is mainly moulded by the cast of the minds that surround it." Does this fact sufficiently influence us in the selection of our teachers for the young? Are we not too indifferent upon this subject? "The wald thought it very unfair to influence a child's mind, by inculcating any opinions, before it should have come to years of discretion, and be able to choose for

itself." I showed him my garden, and told him it was my botanic garden; "How so," said he, "it is covered with weeds." "Oh! I replied, that is because it has not yet come to its age of discretion and choice. The weeds you see have taken the liberty to grow, and I thought it unfair in me, to prejudice the soil in favor of roses and strawberries." This opinion of Thewald, in a modified form, is a very common doctrine at the present time; and, in its practical bearing, opposes no small obstacle in the path of the primary teacher. Hence it becomes a very important inquiry; shall the child be subjected to any restraint or discipline, shall it be formed and tained in its mental and physical habits, by the more mature, well cultivated habits of the teacher? Then what shall be the character of this discipline, and how shall it be most happily and successfully secured? We answer, that both will depend essentially upon the taste, the judgment, the qualities of mind, the degree of culture and the attainments of the teacher.

It will be readily admitted by all that in childhood, as a general rule, is laid the foundation for all that is great and good in humanity; or rather we might affirm it to be true, that the cause of so little goodness and real greatness in the world, is to be attributed to the neglect of proper culture in the young. In children we find the pure elements of all that virtue and nobleness which are to bless the world. "Suffer little children to come unto me, said the Great Teacher, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Are we not to be held responsible for the development and training of these Heaven given elements, that the end may be secured, which infinite Wisdom designed in their creation?

Is it not then a question of vast importance both to the child and to the world; how much of the evil, what proportion of the suffering, in which so many are involved, is chargeable upon the influences brought to bear upon childhood, in its course of elementary training? Have we an element on earth, in infancy, fitted for the Kingdom of Heaven? How transformed and changed in its sojourn here below! Have we not as teachers, much to do in the formation of

character, in those who receive their first impressions from our teaching and example? "Example is our preceptor before we can reason." Are we not essentially laying foundations for a superstructure, which is to go forward in its growth and completion, through two worlds? What period in education then, I ask, is to be regarded of highest importance? Is it when the mental energies are somewhat developed, the mind matured, and discretion and judgment begin to exercise their functions? Is it not rather when the mind and heart, and all the affections are perfectly plastic, and susceptible to any impression which may be made? Is it not when by a single flash of light may be daguerreotyped upon the brain and heart of the pupil, the image of the teacher? Evidently our primary schools exert a more potent influence in shaping mind and forming character, than has ever been awarded them. If the right direction was only given, if the child in its elementary training, could be subjected to such influences as tend to elevate, enlarge and enoble the human faculties, to sanctify and purify the heart, then most surely should we find little occasion for establishing institutions for the sole purpose of juvenile restraint and reformation.

How much better as well as happier, for parent, child and society, to have exercised suitable care, in the early *forming* process, than be compelled from necessity to submit to the painful and humiliating trial of reformatory measures. When the mind is so developed and matured, as to be capable of judging and deciding for itself, then are teachers in some degree relieved from that responsibility for which they are justly held chargeable in the earlier stages of education.

It may be admitted, that all this importance which we claim, does truly attach itself to first impressions and first influences; but it is said, this duty nature itself imposes upon mothers, that they are the first educators, the primary teachers, who are to be held accountable for all the evils which result from bad training or no training at all. While we would by no means exonerate the mother from her sacred

duties to her children, but would invoke and earnestly entreat the hearty coöperation of parents, in the great work of education; we are constrained to say, that it is simply impossible for most mothers, with the manifold duties imposed upon them, caring as they must for the physical well-being of their children, also to exercise that systematic course of mental and moral training, which may justly be regarded as the true and sure foundation of future greatness and goodness. As a general thing, the mother may as reasonably be expected to officiate as family physician, or perform the duties of the parish minister, as to conduct and carry forward the education of her children. Who then is to be called in to supply this deficiency?

Who is to take the place of the mother in this great work? Who is to become the guardian, the guide and exemplar to these God-given immortals, who, while on earth even, are objects of earnest solicitude to the inhabitants of heaven? We answer the teacher. The primary school is heaven's great nursery. Do you speak of the sabbath school in this connection? In the comparison, it is powerless. The influences of the secular school form the habits and give the tone to character. These two instrumentalities should work in harmony, and might thus aid each other vastly, but the one is very little thought of in connection with the other. In this, particular, there is great room for improvement. The primary teacher is the practical educator, the architect, who plans the building and draws the outlines, and gives the directions for the superstructure which shall command the admiration of future ages, and even cause rejoicings among angels in the realms above. Is it then a matter of small importance, to whom we entrust the work of moulding mind and implanting first impressions in childhood? Who can tell how many have suffered physically, have lost limbs, been made cripples for life, through ignorance or want of skill in the operating surgeon? Who has ever witnessed the torture necessarily occasioned by the skillful operator, in re-producing a fracture as the only possible method of correcting the gross blunder of the ignorant

performer, and preventing deformity for life? Are the sufferings of the mind and soul less than those of the body? Let the institutions for reform, the penitentiary, the domestic fireside, made wretched and miserable through disgrace and ruin brought upon a loved family by the depravity of the young, answer the question.

If it be true, that these sad results are in any degree traceable to the school-room, or are chargeable to a want of skill, fidelity or efficiency there, is it a question of little consequence, who are the educators of our children, and what is the true vocation of those who have this high trust in charge? Does not the teacher exert an influence which marks the social, the moral as well as the intellectual character of the pupil? How can this influence be of the noblest and most salutary kind, acting with the power of the lever, elevating the child higher and higher into regions of purer thought, higher in moral influence and intellectual greatness except the teacher possess in an eminent degree, education, culture, and refinement. "The mind is made wealthy by ideas, but the multitude of words is a clogging weight." So culture and refinement give an upward tendency to the affections, awaken the purest feelings of the heart, and enkindle within, holy aspirations.

Perhaps it will be said that we are behind the age, that this subject and these questions were discussed and settled by the wise and the learned in years that are past. This may have been so. But what are we profited, if we have never duly considered and acted upon these conclusions? We must of course go back to first principles. If there are radical defects in our educational system, as demonstrated by its results, or if our schools fail to furnish evidence of that degree of moral and intellectual greatness, which may reasonably be demanded of them, then it becomes a legitimate subject of inquiry, to ask for the cause of these defects, to ascertain whether the fault is in the system, or in the agencies employed in reducing the system to practice.

We entertain the opinion, after a careful investigation, and an observation of many years, that there has been a

radical mistake, a grand oversight as to the capacity, culture, mental discipline, intellectual attainments and the high state of refinement required in our elementary teachers. As well might the horticulturist look for flowers and fruits, from plants and trees without soil or roots, as for us to expect true mental development and symmetrical growth of character in our children without presenting to them proper motives, suitable incentives and just encouragements. How can this be done, except the teacher possess, in a very considerable degree, those qualities so desirable to be awakened and cultivated in the child? Our elementary teachers are the essential and prominent moulders of mind: under their instructions impressions are made, and habits formed; a tendency and direction given to the human faculties, which are to mark and form the future man. Can there be a higher vocation, a more responsible position held by human agency on earth? Does it not take the young mind in comparative innocence and purity, and inscribe upon its tablets those first impressions which are never to be effaced? Will not these first impulses deepen and strengthen in future growth, and then reproduce themselves in other minds, thus influencing, in their turn, those whom they reach as they themselves have been influenced? Is not this the position held, this the work assigned the elementary teacher? Is the responsibility of the trust thus imposed, overrated? Who then will venture upon the discharge of these high duties, without having made all reasonable efforts for a preparation of the head and the heart, which shall be in some proper degree, adequate to the successful performance of the great work?

In view of the importance which the primary school holds in our educational system, in what regard should the primary teacher be held, in the estimation of the community? We answer; as one whose very position demands the highest respect from all, and not as a mere domestic the servant of all, and consequently subject to censure from all. Is it not for the interest as well as for the greatest good of the young, that the teacher be awarded such a position in society, as shall be most favorable to the culture of those

traits of character, which we desire to see cultivated in the youth of her charge? Further than this: is it not very desirable that such encouragement should be given pecuniarily, and such inducements extended as will influence the most talented and highly educated to engage in the work of teaching as a permanent profession?

At this stage of our inquiry in regard to the character and importance of primary education, we must notice the position held by Committees, Boards of Visitors and School Officers. In an important sense, this whole matter is intrusted to their charge. Here is a great mistake in our judgment. Parents throw the responsibility upon school officers, they in turn upon the teachers, and neither of the parties alone, is competent to the *right* performance of the great work. Here is a trinity in unity, that all *can* understand. Parents must recognize the fact, that they have much, very much to do in the education of their children. They must pay some *personal* attention to the work, or it cannot be successfully accomplished. The *three*, then, which should become *one*, in the great cause of education, are parent, school officer and teacher.

We must reserve our views, in regard to the specific duties of the first two, to another number. Thus, however, it may be seen, that just so far as either party fails to perform the appropriate part, or performs it inadequately, in that degree does the cause suffer, and that suffering is not to be charged upon the one party, which may have performed its part, to the highest degree of perfection. But so it is. "If one member suffers, the whole body suffers." We shall all agree however, that it becomes a matter of the deepest interest, to secure teachers for our elementary schools, of the best natural abilities, the highest intellectual attainments, the most refined manners, together with amiableness of disposition and the most kindly affections. When these qualifications are insisted upon as the only passport to the teacher's profession, and when the profession is so elevated in its character as to invite into its ranks those who possess in some fair degree these requisites, then may we reasonably

hope for the happy results which our system of common schools is most admirably adapted to secure.

We may add, that the rich blessings of education can in no other way be extended to the children of our common country. Then, as we deplore that state of ignorance and semi-barbarism which prevails in those countries, where the advantages of the common school are not enjoyed; as we deplore and lament the condition of our own country, at the present time, involved in all the horrors of a bloody war, let us direct our energies with new zeal, to the work of early culture in our children. Let them be educated for the higher and holier purpose of promoting peace on earth, and of transmitting the blessings of peace to future generations.

"THE MARKING SYSTEM."

THE practice of keeping a record of daily recitations, indicating the merit of each pupil's performance by a figure, has long been in use, both in colleges and in our common schools. We are aware that it is a little dangerous, to call in question a custom of so long standing, and especially one that claims the sanction of so many eminent educators. In some schools you will find their books of entries and records as numerous as those of the wholesale merchant or the banker, sometimes requiring the larger portion of one teacher's time, to make the entries and so keep the accounts as to be prepared for the monthly report. Is it just, and does it pay? We humbly invite teachers, committees and all who are interested in the subject of education, to carefully consider, with us, some of the practical bearings of this system. Are the true ends and the great object of education promoted by it? Is the system calculated to advance the highest good of the entire school, where it is practiced? If these two questions can be answered in the affirmative, then the point is settled in favor of continuing the practice. If on the other hand, it can be shown that great evils are connected with the system, that great injustice is done to individuals certainly, if not

even to the majority of pupils, and that the cause of education suffers more than it gains from this practice, then most surely it ought to be forever abandoned. Perhaps some will say, you are making too serious a matter of this; it is used merely for convenience, stimulating some pupils it is true, but enabling us simply, to better classify our schools, and give to each pupil his rank upon his card, and on the records.

This card then, it is to be observed, is circulated through the district or city, that all who are interested may know the relative standing of each pupil in the school. We intend to regard the system as a very serious affair, for we believe great injustice and much suffering to be connected with it. While it gives great encouragement to those who need it not, it depresses others, and in some cases, no doubt, so discourages them as to compel them to leave school, and essentially deprives them of their education, and changes their future course of life. We doubt not there are temporary advantages gained by it, it operates on the minds of many as a powerful stimulus, awakening in them the most earnest resolves, and determining them, if it is possible, by the most intense application, to obtain the highest mark in the class or in the school. It makes it certain to the teacher, that there will always be more or less in the class, upon whom perfect reliance can be placed; they will at all times be ready, so the recitation will never be a failure. "Go to such a school," says the acting visitor, or the committee, "and you will never fail to hear a splendid recitation." True, it may be so. The teacher is commended, pupils flattered, and the school pronounced one of the best, and so it may be. But who recited? Did you hear from every member of the class? Is every pupil called upon to give answer? Certainly not, only a few perhaps, on such occasions, occupy the time; and those who thus recite so finely, will very likely be found to stand high on the records, and so they should, but they would stand high without the records.

Does this class of pupils require any such incentive to urge them on? Would they not most likely excel, without any collateral inducement to extra effort? But how does

the system operate upon another class of pupils, quite as industrious and as deserving as the former, so far as application and a desire to improve are concerned, but who know they must always accept a lower place, on the card, than their classmates? This could be endured, if it was certain that the mark was always just, indicating truly the pupil's knowledge of the subject.

Then there is another important point to be regarded, namely, the *motive* which prompts the effort made for the highest mark. Does the system encourage, in a proper way, the true love of improvement? Is the pupil thus taught, in the struggle for the mastery, that the powers of mind possessed, are given of God, and that an obligation rests upon them to cultivate these faculties in the highest degree, and that where much is given, it is but reasonable to expect great progress and high attainments? Does not the system tend to awaken in some, an inordinate desire to excel, from the comparatively low motive of obtaining the highest mark?

Again, does not the *marking* depend essentially, if not entirely upon the verbal recitation, and may not this be secured upon many subjects studied, without a thorough knowledge or true understanding of the same? Is it not also true, that there are many pupils, who blessed with a retentive memory, gain a superficial knowledge of the lesson, by the aid of keys and translations, together with borrowing a little from their neighbors, which will enable them to go through with the recitation smoothly, and obtain a higher mark than others, who actually possess a more thorough knowledge of the same lesson? The system cannot detect the deception and do justice alike to all classes of pupils.

Do we not also hear pupils, who would be glad to be thorough in all their lessons, exclaim, "Oh! I can't stop to understand; if I repeat every word of the text, I shall get a high mark." We believe it to be true, that this is the language of many scholars, who feel that the very system compels them to hasten on, committing to memory words and rules which are entirely unmeaning to them, but if they stop to fully understand what they are studying, they do it, at

the risk of losing a high figure for their recitation, the mark being given for the verbal repetition of the text, rather than for a perfect comprehension of the subject.

The mark as a general thing, must thus be given, if given at all; we can measure words, and when they are glibly uttered in large quantities, without hesitation or inaccuracy, the inference is, that all is right; the pupil is praised, and a high mark is given for the performance. Do we in this way make thorough, thinking, self-relying scholars? Do we not rather, by this system, encourage a parrot-like mode of recitation, in fact pay a premium, offer a reward for this superficial method of word-uttering, and then straightway even, prate lustily, about *thoroughness* in teaching? Is there in reality, anything like teaching, in the true sense of the term, in this mechanical method of grinding out a lesson, so long sanctioned and encouraged by the marking system? Does not the custom naturally lead, in the study of mathematics, to the use of that convenient assistant, "The key, containing full and clear solutions to all the examples?" And we believe it to be a fact, that after a pupil has studied mathematics for years, with the aid of "keys," and abundant explanations, he understands just as much of the subject, as he would of the science of music, after having turned the crank of a hand-organ for the same space of time, and not much more, all that book-publishers and key-makers say to the contrary, notwithstanding. So also in the study of the classics, translations and annotations are called in to assist in preparing the smooth-flowing recitation.

The same is also true, in the use of too much collateral aid upon other subjects of study. Why should it not be so? Is not much hard study to the pupil thus saved? And is it not infinitely easier for the teacher to *hear* a lesson recited, than to *teach*? If we could secure any true mental growth in this way, there would be force in the argument, which pleads for these artificial collaterals, in the course of education. But the law of the mind's growth is not one of our making; the first great object of the teacher is to find out that law, and then work in harmony with it. As the law

came from God, who made the mind, and established certain fixed principles for its development and maturity, so is it sure, that if we fail to discover the true process of training mind, we shall also fail in securing its highest advancement and true end. It seems to us very clear, that thoroughness in teaching, cannot be claimed for the marking system?

Another fact must be noticed in reference to its injustice. In many schools, the classes are so large, that it is not always convenient, if possible, to call upon every member of the class, during the same recitation; therefore one portion of the class recites to day, another to morrow, and so on, yet every pupil is to be marked for every lesson. Then again, different pupils must recite different portions of the same lessons, and here again are different degrees of difficulty. A scholar, who by chance is called upon, on one part of the lesson and receives a high mark, might have received a very low mark, in another part of the lesson.

Some one may ask, how is it, that a pupil can be marked, when he does not recite? Why they of course, have an average mark, that is, if they recited well when last called upon, then they will have a favorable mark, when not called upon; the same is also true of the opposite, if when last reciting, a low mark was received, then a low mark is repeated, however well prepared the pupil might be for a high one. The injustice of this course seems to us manifest, from the fact, that different lessons and even different parts of the same lesson, involve vastly different degrees of difficulty, so that no teacher could possibly make just and proper discrimination. Then again, the pupil, who fails to day, and thereby receives a low mark, says, I will redeem that to-morrow; I will be sure and have a good, a perfect lesson; by extra diligence, and hard study, he feels certain of success, and waits anxiously for the trial, not doubting that a high mark will crown his efforts: the morrow comes, he is all ready, waiting his turn, but the recitation closes, he is not called upon; but the low mark of the former lesson is repeated upon the records. Was it not discouraging to the pupil; was it not also unjust even if a probability existed of obtain-

ing a high mark? If this omission continues for several days, and low marks are repeated, is not the injustice still more manifest? We suppose just such cases to be common, and therefore must come to the conclusion, that great unfairness is connected with the system.

Another view in the connection, must be looked at. Has not the teacher something to do with the character of the recitation? Will not an inspiring look, an encouraging word, a cheering remark at the commencement of the recitation change entirely its character? Then the waking up of mind, the leading forward the class, the word of explanation, throwing a ray of light, upon the dark places, these certainly have much to do with the character of the performance, and we are not sure, that it is going too far, to say that the merit of the recitation, depends mainly upon the spirit, genius and bearing of the teacher. Who then shall mark the teacher, when by chance, he may not be in the perfect mood, or when possibly a cloud may obscure his vision for the moment, and reflect darkness upon the lesson? Is it quite fair, that there should be marking on the one side, and not on the other?

It seems to us, that there is but one method of applying this system with any degree of justice, and that this application of it, has nothing of *true teaching* in it. We can simply avoid injustice in its use, by giving the same written questions to each pupil, then allowing sufficient time for each scholar, as he thinks quickly or more moderately, to solve the questions submitted, according to his knowledge and ability.

Does it not sometimes appear at the annual or semi-annual examination, when the pupils are examined by written questions, that some receive a much higher mark, than their average, for the same space of time? Is it not also true, that others receive a lower, than their average mark? If this is so, how can it be accounted for, except on the ground of inaccuracy or injustice in the previous marking? Don't understand that we charge injustice upon any teacher who practices the system, but we charge it upon the system, and

call upon the friends of it, to show if the charge is not well grounded and sustained.

We would then briefly sum up the evils of the system, by saying that it seems to us, that there is great injustice in it; that it encourages only a small class, while it discourages a much larger; that it favors word-uttering merely, and does not secure thoroughness; that it flatters the vanity of some, while it sadly depresses in spirit others; that it does not present to the mind of the pupil the true motive for improvement. It is an obstacle directly in the path, between pupils and teacher, it imparts neither life nor spirit to the exercise, but is mechanical and monotonous in its operation. Thus it fails of promoting the true interests of education, it awakens not into activity the full energies of the pupil's mind, it secures not to the class, the practical benefit of the teacher's influence, in the radiant smile of approbation and stimulating words of encouragement. If we have made out our case, we would then say, that the system, in a reasonably short time, should disappear from our schools.

IMPORTANCE OF A MORE THOROUGH TRAINING IN ELOCUTION IN OUR SCHOOLS.¹

BY MARK BAILY.

EVERY study is valuable in proportion as it tends to develop and cultivate the mind and person of the learner, and to furnish him with the best means and incitements for his great life-work of *self culture*. The best incitement to any work, and the most permanent, is the *personal interest* of the scholar in it. The natural activity of any of his faculties yields some satisfaction. The mere acquisition of knowledge is pleasing; the exercise of his mind, of reason especially, is gratifying; but the consciousness that his *whole being is growing*—that he is acquiring new *personal power*, to *think*, to *feel* and to *express*, affords one of the noblest and sweetest enjoyments of a rational being.

Hence that special study will be comparatively the best, which together with the most useful knowledge and the best

mental discipline, furnishes the *richest* means of personal culture, thus enlisting in its service the self-love and enthusiasm of the pupil, the most potent incitements to that *hard work* which alone can secure great excellency in anything.

Measured by the above tests, why should not the art of elocution rank among the foremost studies in all our schools, instead of being kept in the background, as it usually is—the primary and middle classes hastening over the mere outside forms of expression and the older classes neglecting even these?

What other study can be of such primary and life-long *use* to the scholar, including as it does the most accurate knowledge and use of the *language* we speak, quite as much as the *manner of reading*, nay more, embracing a most minute study of *ideas* which alone give meaning and value to words and tones. All the agents of expression must be studied in connection with the things or ideas expressed; they cannot be mastered abstractly; they would be of no use if they could. The sculptor molds a more beautiful statue because in addition to his skill in execution, he has a more exact knowledge of the human form. The great painter excels not by his finished coloring alone, he has, as well, a more definite knowledge of the landscape he copies. And so he who would excel in vocal expression of ideas in reading or speaking, must, beside his superior vocal culture, be more familiar with all the exact lights and shades in the meaning and relation of words and with the relative worth and beauty of ideas and emotions.

In *mental discipline*, what other branch of education equals such a thorough training in elocution as I am advocating? What else employs at once in harmonious action so many faculties, intellectual and emotional, as well as expressive? *Insight* to see the precise meaning of what is to be read, the ideas. *Judgment* to weigh their relative importance for correctly distributing the expressive lights and shades of emphasis. *Sympathy* in appreciating the kind and degree of feeling. *Taste* in giving proper rhythm and melody. *Imagination* in making real and present all the circumstances

of character, time and place with all the modulations of voice necessary to *express naturally* these varied thoughts and feelings, and when in declamation or recitation we add the practice of memory and appropriate gestures, what is there left of the "whole man" that is not being cultivated in this single exercise of elocution?

But the crowning grace of education is *personal culture* as distinguished from mere learning and intellectual power. What rare culture of the eye, the ear, the voice, the hand, of the whole person by which the intellectual and emotional seem to shine through the physical man and spontaneously express their every passing shade of thought and feeling. A little music and drawing are doing something towards educating the ear, the eye and the hand in a few of our schools. Yet the great lack of emotional and expressive culture, every enlightened observer must see, is the most lamentable feature of our American education. With here and there an eloquent exception, our educated men who have graduated at our best common schools, our high schools and colleges, and our seminaries of sacred learning, intellectual as they are, are so utterly destitute of this emotional and expressive *personal culture*, that they read and speak of the most exciting themes ever revealed to man, in that voice and manner so dull, monotonous and passionless, that we should never dream they *had*, but for the catechism, *souls*, or that "there is in souls a sympathy with sounds."

What but a more thorough elocutionary training through the whole course of instruction can supply this great want of *personal culture* and redeem our schools from the crime of a heartless and voiceless education.

As one of the extrinsic incentives, to this work, call to mind the historic fact that the expressive arts have always been held in the highest esteem among cultivated people and marked success in any of them has received supreme honor. To give *fit expression* in some outward forms or colors, words or sounds, to the inmost feelings of humanity, has ever been regarded as the consummate triumph of genius and culture.

What lavish praise is justly bestowed on "the few immortal names," who have enriched the world with the great works of art—in sculpture, painting, poetry and music. Yet the wondrous merit of these master artists was simply that they gave *perfect expression* to what their admirers only see and feel.

Thus the simplest lesson in reading which is what it should be, an endeavor to give perfect expression to some idea or sentiment, is radically connected with the proudest of the fine arts. "*A word fitly spoken* is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." Let teachers and pupils once appreciate this ennobling relation and much of the mechanical drudgery of teaching and learning would be changed to delightful labor, for they would then see with Shakespeare's love-inspired Ferdinand that their.

"Most poor matters
Point to rich ends."

But is not this long introduction about the fine arts and expressive culture, *practically* considered all "highfalutin?" Can children be taught to *feel* and *express* as well as to know and to think? Can elocution, like arithmetic, be thoroughly taught in our *common schools*? Why not? Is there anything wanting on the part of the pupils?

Children all *talk* before they come to school; they have ideas about a great many things; they have words and voices to utter their ideas in conversation and even before they have words at all they have most expressive tones and gestures, by which they make known their feelings. They instinctly understand the tones of love, and of hate, of reproof and praise, the frown and smile, the gesture of welcome and repulsion,—all are perfectly understood by children long before the usualage for entering the school; imagination too, at an early age is most busy and vivid, transforming the merest rag into the living doll, chairs and tables into men and women, and each character in the imagined play made to converse with a naturalness, that puts to shame the affected efforts of many older players.

Now what material is wanting here for the most complete

success in reading and recitation if wisely worked and cultivated? They can understand simple ideas and feelings; they have, or can easily be taught to have appropriate words and tones for telling them; vivid imagination to realize all the circumstances; strong and ready feeling, flexible voices usually and sometimes native gesture, felicitously suited to the idea; all these essential elements of eloquent vocal expression most children have in abundance out of school in conversation and play.

Are the conditions of successful culture so far as the scholars are responsible, in any other study so complete and ripe for use? Why is it then that with all our boasted improvements in the philosophy and art of teaching, with so many excellent teachers anxious to do their best, and successful in so many other things; why is it that there are *so few* who really learn to read decently, so few who learn at school even to enunciate the *elementary sounds* of our native language with their proper fullness and clearness; so few who *pronounce* the commonest words with any refined accuracy, fewer who express intelligibly the *ideas* with their relative lights and shades of meaning and worth, fewer still who make any attempt to express the *feelings* in what is read, the *heart and soul* of the thoughts! Is it not plainly and solely because,

1st. Most teachers themselves are not as well cultivated in the *art* of elocution as they should be; they are not trained in the quick analysis of the thoughts and sentiments to be read; they are not masters of their own feelings or of their own voices for expressing them and therefore cannot *train* their pupils in vocal culture, and arouse their feelings by the electric charm of emotion in their own voice, cannot give practical illustrations and corrections and hence lose the most potent agents of all teaching and learning, *example* by the teacher and imitation by the scholars.

2d. Because most teachers are not well acquainted with the *science* of elocution. They do not understand the simple principles of expression, and can not give intelligent instruction even if they could read well; they can only teach

the young idea to "shoot" at random without definite aim or effect.

Without clear principles, which alone make any study intelligible, and easy, and interesting, teachers are obliged to call in the help of such *arbitrary rules* as avaricious publishers preface their reading books with, to gull the uninitiated who are to commend and introduce them, a multitude of arbitrary impractical rules which neither enlighten nor interest pupils, which have as many exceptions as observances and like the manners of Denmark,—"Are more honored in the breach than the observance."

The fundamental principles of any science are very few and like the law of gravity which in the same way controls atoms and worlds, are as simple as they are comprehensive. They have no exceptions and when once seen are sure guides.

Principles bring order out of chaos; they appeal in their constant recurrence and application to the *reason* and *sympathy* of the scholar not to his bare memory; they grow out of the sense and spirit of what is to be uttered, not out of the accidental forms as rules may, and by leading the reader constantly back to the spirit which alone should control the voice, they tend to inspire and preserve that beautiful naturalness in elocution which is the consummation of Art.

"Making nature more natural by *Art*."

3d. Teachers are less successful in elocution than in other studies, because they have no such progressive system of instruction as they have in arithmetic, commencing with the unit of the child's intelligence and feeling, and gradually unfolding more and more difficult lessons as the mind and heart and voice of the child unfold.

The greatest care is needed at every step of progress, to adapt the given lesson as near as possible to the understanding and appreciation of every reader; lest you should forever divorce expression from sense and feeling; this last is the unforgivable sin in teaching reading. Better that the scholar never hear of such an art as reading, than that he be

permitted to acquire the habit of a formal utterance, that is not prompted from within.

In arithmetic, if a scholar fails to comprehend any one important step, any one principle, he is stopped, perhaps put back into a lower class, so essential to further progress is his clear mastery of every point deemed.

But in reading, though unmindful of both the sense and the spirit, and innocent of any thought of the existence of a principle, if he "puts through" the right number of words on a high key with a loud voice, he is blissfully left to believe he has done a "big thing," and to wait impatiently the time when he shall astonish the world with his oratorical genius.

Without personal cultivation in the art, without a knowledge of the first principles of expression of the science of elocution, without any progressive system carefully adapted at every onward step to the mind of the learner, is it at all surprising that the elocution of our schools should be comparatively so miserable?

But what is the remedy for this evil? The very reasons for this failure suggest their own cure.

1st. Teachers must strive to make themselves more competent to give their scholars illustrations of excellent reading. They must study and practice elocution as they would music, with the best instructors if possible, if not, commence the work of self culture of the ear, the feelings and the voice. A careful study of the best conversation near him will furnish the practical teacher with innumerable beautiful examples of natural expression which may be transferred to the school room. We cultivate the arm by systematic exercise, so must we exercise what *feeling* we have to gain more. Practice as well as you can the voice you have in uttering versatile emotions, and every day will bring its golden mite of improvement. No other branch of education proffers such a wide range of splendid examples for practice. All the accumulated wisdom and wit of the ages in prose and poetry are at your service.

Let the best readers in school select occasionally for a large audience, such passionate pieces as most interest them;

this public exercise kindles ambition, and raises the standard of elocution with all.

2d. Teachers must study out at least the primary and most common principles of the science, that they may make intelligent imitators, emulating only what is excellent in others. Most celebrated men are eloquent in spite of *some gross faults*. A little knowledge of the science of elocution would enable their admirers to analyze the orators' style, and separate what is false and peculiar to the individual, which should never be copied from the genuine elements of eloquence.

An American sea captain tells a story of the Chinese, that happily illustrates this need. He sent to a Chinese sail-maker some new sail cloth and with it sent the old worn out sail, telling him to make the new one just like the old,—he did so literally, and where there was a hole in the old sail he tore one in the new, and wasted days in browning and soiling it to the likeness of the old one. So without some analytical science will children and adults imitate the follies and the errors, as well as the virtues and beauties of those whom they look up to.

3d. That they may save much time and ensure a healthy progress, teachers must exhaust their wit in better adapting their daily lessons to the mental grade of the scholars, as no one can possibly learn to express well, what he does not well understand and feel. Set pupils at the very outset to comprehend the fact that reading and speaking are nothing more or less than *talking*; that they are to *tell* these ideas in reading, so that listeners will understand and appreciate them; *tell* them as they would at home with their natural pitch and variety of voice; talk with the scholar about these very thoughts and feelings before he attempts to read them. Those who have been fortunate in having cultivated society out of school, often talk exceedingly well: such can easily be made to read as well, at least, as they converse.

Teach reading precisely as you teach arithmetic or any other art. First let the class state the problem, in general terms,—What is it that they propose to read? Is it something

merry in sentiment or sad, or noble, or beautiful, or solemn, or ridiculous? Then, what are the individual ideas? what is the first idea? the second? the third, &c. This is better than asking for the emphatic word, lest they only guess right and read words, not thoughts as they should.

The specific emotions and ideas clearly seen by all; then may follow an exercise for teaching scholars to *think finely*, for cultivating their common sense and common taste (if I may use these last words in the same liberal meaning as the first,) in estimating the *relative worth* of these particular ideas.

This is often a difficult and delicate task and calls out great variety of judgment and taste, but opens the way naturally for the most precious part of education; the molding and refining influence of the more enlightened mind and cultivated taste of the teacher on the pupils in mutually discussing the relative value, and beauty of different ideas and sentiments. What a splendid opportunity this presents day after day, for inspiring children with an ardent love for what is right and beautiful, brave and lovely in human character and conduct, and with aversion to all that is wrong and selfish, mean and cowardly. This great diversity of opinion admonishes us never to correct a child's reading, till we find out what his idea was. Perhaps he did express his own conception of the meaning, and if we correct his reading, and leave his thoughts unchanged, we have divorced his expression from his mind, have committed the greatest elocutionary sin of putting asunder what God hath joined together.

When this thorough logical and emotional analysis is accomplished, and not till then, we are ready to ask the first question in elocution proper;—How can we make them feel that this is joyous and that is sad, that this is admiration, and that is contempt? How can we with the voice *express* these different ideas? How can we make listeners know that *this* idea is *more important* than *that* in our mind?

This knowledge, so far as practicable, should be called out from the class; some will tell you at once that we speak

louder the more important idea. Thus they have discovered for themselves, *one* useful element of vocal expression, *force* of voice. They have revealed too, without knowing it, the law of principle, for using it. After determining the general spirit as bold or gentle, a common place, and the general degree of force as loud, or gentle, or moderate. To express the particular ideas, *distribute* the relative lights and shades of force according to the relative value of these ideas.

If the general character or spirit of the sentence is tenderness, the average or *standard* degree of force will naturally be *subdued*, yet the individual ideas under this common sentiment, will have the same relative degrees of importance as they would if the general spirit were impassioned and the standard force *very loud*. So call their attention to time.

1st. The average or standard degree of time, as adapted to the general spirit of the paragraph. Every child knows that a lively spirit quickens the movements of the voice as well as the limbs as a solemn sentiment inspires slower time. But for expressing the different ideas, time varies with the relative worth of these ideas, just as in map drawing; we must first determine the scale on which we project it. Then we have the same *relative* measurements in giving the definite features of a country, whether the given scale be large or small, or as in painting an animal or a flower, first we must settle the genus, the kind, as horse or rose, then the specific features and proportions of the individual.

So in every case in elocution, we have the same principle to guide us, in the use and application of these elements of expression, first, the general color, then the lights and shades.

As reading is a lesson in *expression*, let scholars as soon as possible apprehend the great general truth that expression every where in nature and in art depends on some kinds of lights and shades: let them look at the 'blackboard' which has only one shade of one color, and no expression, just because it has no different colors or shades. Then at the map on the wall which has different colors, and as they will tell

you, expresses by these the ideas of land and water and of different countries.

In elocution, of course, expression depends on vocal lights and shades. Thus blending induction when available, with positive instruction, the teacher who is skilled in analyzing the voice, can unfold to his scholars some practical knowledge of all the elements of elocution, of force, time, slides, pitch, melody, stress, volume and quality of voice, every one of which elements they are using synthetically every time they speak.

But let not those who feel unable to give perfect illustrations of reading and thus teach by example, nor those who have not science enough to analyze expression, and thus make scholars teach themselves, be discouraged from doing all they can in their own way.

The thorough and genial mental preparation for reading which we have suggested will of itself remove half of the difficulty. And although many teachers may not be able without more culture in elocution themselves, to make their scholars masters of the art, they can hardly fail in this way to substitute for that doleful monotony and heartlessness, so common in the school room and the pulpit, *something* of the expression, variety, earnestness and naturalness of the street and the play-ground

M. B.

OFFICIAL DEPARTMENT.

SCHOOL LAWS.—The acts relating to Education passed by the last General Assembly, were published in the August No. of the Journal.

The first amendment, Chap. VIII, of Public Acts, is in addition to an Act concerning rate bills, page 26th, compilation of 1860, and permits tuition or rate bills to be made out and presented any time previous to the last week of the term. No district is compelled by law to assess a tuition bill upon

those attending school, but when this is done the bills can be presented before the commencement of school as was the case under the law of 1859.

Chap. XXXI, allows the Board of School Visitors of towns which, previous to the abolishing of school societies by act of 1856, consisted of two or more school societies, to appoint a sub-committee of one of their number to visit the schools of such part of the town as was formerly embraced in the limits of a school society.

Such sub-committees are to be called acting school visitors and as such will be subject to the provisions relating to acting school visitors as found in chap. V. page 31st and 32d, compilation of 1860.

Chap. XLVIII, is an alteration in the law which allows the annual meeting of school districts to be held either in August or September.

Chap. LIII, relates to the town school tax and the income from the town deposit fund at six per cent; one half of the income to be distributed to the districts pro rata, according to the number of children enumerated, and the other half under the direction of the selectmen and town treasurer, while the town school tax was to be distributed under the direction of the selectmen and school visitors.

The present law requires all the interest or income from the town deposit fund, and all town school tax required by law, to be distributed under the direction of the selectmen and school visitors on or before the fourth day of March, annually.

Chap. LIV, is a "healing act," and simply confirms the acts of districts and district officers where the proceedings of either were not strictly according to law.

Chap. LVI, relates to town high schools. The first section is simply a re-enactment of the provisions of chap. V, section 1st, of the school law. Sec. 2d authorizes a town to appoint a committee of not more than five residents of the town, who shall have the same powers and duties in relation to the high school, that district committees have in relation to district schools. Whenever towns fail to appoint

such committee, the board of school visitors are required to appoint one.

The compilation of the school laws in force September, 1860, has been distributed to the several towns and districts of the state, and all the alterations or additions made by the last General Assembly have been distributed to the acting school visitors of the several towns in the Common School Journal.

SCHOOL BUSINESS FOR SEPTEMBER. School districts which have not held their annual meeting in August should hold it in September.

District committees must make their reports to the school visitors on or before the fifteenth of September. No district is entitled to receive its share of the public money from the state treasury unless the district committee has made its annual report. Blank forms for these reports were distributed early in the year.

The acting school visitors of every town are required to make a full report of the condition of the common schools of said town and of all the important facts concerning the same, to the superintendent of common schools, on or before the first day of October, and to answer all inquiries that may be propounded to him or them on the subject of common schools by said superintendent.

No town is entitled to receive its share of the public money from the treasury of the state, unless this report shall have been made by the school visitors as required by law.

Blank forms with inquiries to be answered by school visitors have been distributed with post-paid envelopes for returning the same, to every town in the state.

It is to be hoped that the acting school visitors will attend to this part of their duty promptly, and make out a full statement of the condition of schools in addition to the statistics furnished by the answers to inquiries on the blank forms.

If districts have failed to comply with the law in regard to furnishing suitable school houses or in other respects; or if district committees have failed to make their reports, it should be stated in the report of the school visitors.

Any items of interest in relation to a particular school, or the general working of the school system may well find a place in the report.

DAVID N. CAMP,
Superintendent of Common Schools.

Resident Editor's Department.

For the Common School Journal.

MUSINGS.

WHAT a world of changes is this!—not merely in human souls, when some sudden shock extinguishes the sunlight of joy, and renders the rest of this earthly life a weary pilgrimage, but in the outward workings of Nature, likewise. Yesterday the glorious summer sunshine spread a quiet beauty over hill-side and plain; the breeze sighed gently through the forest-branches, and the corn-tassels nodded gracefully to the passer-by. To-day, how changed! A furious north-east storm sweeps over the drenched earth,—the wind moans fitfully through the forest-aisles,—the hills are hidden by sheets of vapor,—and the storm-clouds fly swiftly over the swaying tree-tops.

As I sit at my study-table, gazing at the landscape before me, and listening to the pattering rain and moaning wind, my mind goes back to similar days in early childhood, and very vivid pictures of some of these scenes come up from memory's store-house. Notwithstanding the risk of a drenching, there was a morning-run down the old lane to the little brook, where such deeds had been achieved in the shape of water-wheels and trip-hammers;—and oh! what delight to find that the tiny stream had overflowed its banks, and was pouring and foaming almost like a river. What sport it was to fling pieces of bark and twigs into the current, and watch them careening and whirling as they swept from our sight.

And then, when nine o'clock drew near, there was preparation to be made for the three-quarters-of-a-mile walk to school. The dinner basket was taken from its hook, and nicely filled with lunch—(for country school-boys are usually blessed with excellent appetites, especially on rainy days.) The old plaid cloak was brought from the

closet, and we were arrayed in its ample folds,—consoling ourselves that it would certainly protect us from the storm, even though we should be “laughed at” by the boys. ‘The umbrella, which had seen service through many a storm, was taken from a corner, and with a “good morning, dear,” from a loved mother, we started. But I need not linger to describe the walk, as, perchance, joined by some young companion, we went merrily along laughing at the wind and rain.

Arrived at the school-room, a half dozen of us, all who were not detained at home by the storm, would gather around the old fashioned “Franklin,” wherein was built a blazing fire. Ah! what a conspicuous part this old stove has played in the early history of many a child! How many blue, pinched fingers have been warmed by it! How many crying little ones, with aching hands and feet, have been hushed to quiet by its heat. Through what fierce winter tempests and chilly summer storms, has its comforting presence been felt. Its faults were many, and its smoke sometimes almost unendurable, but still I look back upon it as an *old friend*.

These stormy days were grand times for study. The school-room was so quiet, and there was so little to attract the attention, that it seemed a real pleasure to solve knotty problems and vexed questions which had puzzled us for weeks. With book and slate in hand, delving into the mysteries of Fractions or Cube Root, the morning hours flew swiftly by. I can see in imagination the whole picture before me,—the hard oak bench with its desk of pine in front bearing the impress of roguish jack-knives :

“* * * * * The seven windowed room,
With side-long desks and oaken pillars tall,
The dunce’s board beset with pail and broom,
And shambling benches flung from wall to wall,”—

the familiar faces of my schoolmates bending over their tasks, and the earnest countenance of our teacher who would speak so kindly, and explain so clearly all the difficult questions of our lessons.

When noontime came and we had eaten our lunch, instead of amusing ourselves with boisterous games, we gathered in a group to converse or read some book which our teacher had kindly lent us. The afternoon passed off in much the same way as the morning, and when night came we separated, happy with the thought that we had learned much that would be of profit to us.

I have many pleasant pictures of stormy days at school, both in summer and in winter, treasured up in my memory. Such days are often among the most joyous ones of childhood, because so different

from the ordinary routine of school life. When years have sped by, and the child has become a man, and gone forth upon the thronged stage of life, the fragrance of these rainy-day hours will still linger around him, and their influence for good or for evil will continue to be felt.

Let me whisper to you, then, fellow-teacher, the moral of these musings. Let me urge you not to neglect your pupils on stormy days. It may seem to you a little matter what you shall say or do when so few are present; but remember that those who come are the *earnest students*, and shape your efforts accordingly. Gain their respect and love by kindly attentions on stormy days, and you will have no difficulty in guiding them when the school-room is crowded, and your mind absorbed with pressing cares.

S. J. W.

WESTFORD, Conn., Aug., 1861.

DING-DING-DING.—I was spending a few days in an excellent hotel at the South. The guests were numerous, and so were the servants. When about to retire, I noticed that the barkeeper rang the bell repeatedly before any servant appeared to accompany me to my room. Directly under my room, in the court of the house, was the bell which summoned the waiters to the office. Hour after hour the bell was jingling, the repetition after the first call having more and more of a scolding, imperative tone. The truth I found to be, to my cost, that the servants, naturally lazy, had become accustomed to wait for the third or fourth call before stirring, so that they did not consider themselves really *called* until the *last ring*; whereas the simple and invariable regulation to *answer the first ring* would have secured proper obedience, and all the subsequent *ding-dings* were not only needless, but mischievous. It would not be strange if they should be entirely disregarded at last.

Parents are apt to *ring too often*. One command or request is enough, if it is understood. Every repetition weakens authority, and encourages disobedience. Let it be a fixed principle of domestic discipline, that instant obedience is to follow each command, and the trouble of government is at an end; while the opposite principle has in it the elements of procrastination and rebellion, which will reach beyond the family and beyond time.

Teachers make the same mistake. Perhaps the school is noisy. Ding-ding goes the bell. The noise continues. Ding-ding-ding.

The timid give heed, but the clamor ceases not. Ding-ding-ding-ding-ding. The school is brought to a stand at last; but the probability is that every subsequent uproar will demand an additional *ding*. The training, to be authoritative and effectual, should be such that the first touch of the bell should arrest every ear, and the refusal to heed that should be dealt with as rebellion.—*Heber*.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE. This useful association held its thirty-second anniversary at Brattleboro, Vt. on the 21st, 22d and 23rd ult. The meeting was a very large one and the lectures and discussions were full of interest and instruction. The spacious town hall in which the Institute met was closely filled, day and evening. We were glad to see a very good delegation from this State. On the list of Vice-Presidents for the ensuing year we find the following Connecticut names: Henry Barnard, Hartford; David N. Camp and Charles Northend, of New Britain; G. F. Phelps, New Haven; E. F. Strong, Bridgeport; J. W. Allen and B. B. Whittemore, Norwich. Organized more than thirty years ago, the Institute has held its annual meetings till the present time, and, apparently, with increasing interest from year to year. Its operations have been productive of great good to the cause of education and done much to elevate the profession of the teacher and secure for those engaged in it the respect and confidence of the community.

It will be seen that two of the Associate Editors have contributed to our present number. The articles are longer than usual but we trust that their length will not prevent a careful perusal. The article on Primary Schools is very valuable. That on the Marking System in our schools will be read with interest though it may not meet the views of all our readers.

We would also particularly commend to our readers the article on elocutionary training by Prof. Baily. In this alone, if read and regarded, our readers will find enough to pay for their year's subscription. The article is intended as an introductory one, designed to prepare the minds of *teachers* to *appreciate* the *work*, and the *minds of pupils* for the practical art of Elocution. Those of our readers who have ever listened to Prof. Baily will need no urging to induce them to read this article.

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

We have on hand several bound volumes of the Journal for the years 1854, 1855, 1858, 1859 and 1860. The vol. for 1854 contains an excellent likeness of the late T. H. Gallaudet; that for 1855 a beautiful likeness and sketch of Henry Barnard, and that for 1858 of John D. Philbrick. We also have unbound volumes for all the years from 1854 to 1860 inclusive. We are authorized to offer one bound and two unbound volumes for **ONE DOLLAR** to any of our subscribers and deliver the same at our office or at any place that may be designated in Hartford or New Haven; or we will send the same, postage paid, to any address on the receipt of \$1.50. Reader will you embrace this opportunity to provide yourself with copies of the Journal at a low rate and at the same time do a good service for the Journal in this time of its need? We have about copies enough to supply half of our subscribers. The managers of the Journal will regard it as a special favor if our subscribers will take these volumes. Those ordering will please designate two or three different bound volumes so that if there is a deficiency of one, another may be selected that will prove satisfactory.

TEACHERS' INSTITUTES.

The Hartford County Institute will be held at Granby during the week commencing Sept. 23rd. That for Litchfield county will be held at Litchfield, commencing Oct. 14th. The arrangements for others have not been fully made but due notice of the time and places will be given by circular. In Windham county there will be two sessions of two days each. One of the sessions will be at Scotland during the latter part of October. Particulars hereafter. There will, probably, be two Institutes of two days each in New Haven county during the present month. One of these will be at Ansonia on the 19th and 20th. Circulars will be issued in a few days.

NORMAL SCHOOL. The next term of this Institution will commence on Wednesday, the 18th inst. and those desirous of attending should make early application to Hon. DAVID N. CAMP, New Britain.

STATE ASSOCIATION. The next annual meeting of this association will be held on the 30th of October, commencing in the evening and continuing through the next day. The place and order of exercises will be given in our next.

CHESTER. We are glad to learn that the graded system adopted in this place about a year ago has worked well and proves a success. The higher department has been under the charge of Miss Mary E. Bassett and the primary department under Miss Mary Spencer. The school year was closed with public exercises which were highly creditable to the school and satisfactory to the citizens.

It was announced at the late meeting of the Alumni of Yale College, that the Scientific Department of that Institution had received during the collegiate year a second donation of \$50,000 from Joseph E. Sheffield, Esq., of New Haven. The course of education in this Department is essentially that of the Polytechnic Schools of Europe, and is designed to fit young men for commercial and other practical pursuits, as well as for the direct applications of science.

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

PRIMARY OBJECT LESSONS for a graduated course of development. A manual for teachers and parents, with lessons for the proper training of the faculties of children. By N. A. Calkins. 12mo. 362 pp. New York, Harper and Brothers.

We are glad to see this book. In its preparation, Mr. Calkins has done a good work for teachers and pupils. Much care and good judgment have been used in the arrangement of the work, and the several subjects are presented with clearness. We most cordially commend the book to teachers. For one dollar it will be forwarded, postage paid to any address, on application to N. A. Calkins, New York.

THE FIFTH READER OF THE SCHOOL AND FAMILY SERIES. By Marcus Wilson. 12mo. 540 pp. New York, Harper and Brothers.

A prominent design in this series is to have each lesson a medium of information on some subject as well as an exercise for reading. The book before us is well printed and illustrated and contains a vast amount of information interesting and useful to the general reader. We commend the book to the attention of teachers and committees.

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